

VZCZCXRO3704
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHBK #5914/01 3270950
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 230950Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0798
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0090
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5208
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 7998
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 2001
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 3953
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 005914

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: THAI ELECTION ROUNDUP: DISQUALIFICATIONS AND
PREDICTIONS

REF: A. BANGKOK 5881 (OATHS AND INSULTS)
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 5749 (ELECTION PLAYBILL)
[1](#)C. BANGKOK 5740 (CANDIDATE REGISTRATION)
[1](#)D. BANGKOK 5667 (CAMPAIGN RULES EASED)
[1](#)E. BANGKOK 5578 (THAI ELECTION SEASON)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Citing duplicate party registrations and other procedural ineligibilities, the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) on November 21 disqualified 37 party list candidates from 16 political parties from competing in the December 23 elections. The ECT threatened legal penalties against disqualified candidates who knowingly violated election rules, while a few candidates vowed to appeal the ECT decision to the Supreme Court. An Administrative Court judge opined that a November 16 ECT decision restricting the campaign activities of 111 former executives of the dissolved Thai Rak Thai party had no legal force. Recent opinion polls of questionable reliability mostly predict a strong showing for the pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP). End summary.

CANDIDATES DISQUALIFIED

[1](#)2. (U) On November 21, the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) announced it had disqualified 37 candidates from 16 political parties who were competing for 80 party list seats in the 480 seat parliament. News reports indicated that the ECT disqualified 33 candidates for being simultaneously registered with multiple parties, while other candidates had allegedly violated election laws by registering to compete for both party list and constituency seats in the December 23 elections. An additional candidate was allegedly not legally resident in the district in which he had registered. The ECT said disqualified candidates had seven days to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court.

[1](#)3. (U) The ECT ruling affected the Ruam Jai Thai Chart Pattana Party the most, as six of its candidates were disqualified. The ECT disqualified three candidates from the Matchima Thippatai Party and two candidates from the For the Motherland Party, including one of the party's deputy leaders. The ECT also disqualified one candidate each from

the pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP) and the Pracharaj Party. The remaining disqualified candidates belonged to lesser-known parties. Several of the disqualified candidates publicly indicated bureaucratic errors led to their disqualification, which they promised to appeal. On November 20, an ECT official said disqualified candidates who knowingly violated election laws could face 10 years imprisonment, fines of up to 200,000 baht (\$6,000), and a 10-year revocation of voting rights.

FALLOUT CONTINUES FROM ECT POLITICAL BAN

¶4. (U) Following the November 16 ECT "advisory" ruling prohibiting the 111 executive members of the dissolved Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party from participating in the December 23 election campaign (reftel A), many of the "banned" TRT executives indicated they would challenge the ECT decision in Thailand's Supreme Administrative Court. On November 20, Akkarathorn Chularat, the president of the Supreme Administrative Court reportedly commented to the media that the ECT ruling was not legally enforceable as he did not consider the ruling an official administrative order. Akkarathorn added that disputes arising from the ECT restrictions should be settled in court. On November 22, some banned politicians lodged a complaint with the regional representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights alleging the ECT order violated their rights to freedom of expression.

OPINION POLLS PREDICT PPP PLURALITY, VOTE-BUYING

BANGKOK 00005914 002 OF 002

¶5. (SBU) During the past several weeks, the media have reported on a slew of pre-election opinion polls. The polls have come from a variety of sources, including academic institutions, political party-funded internal polling, and (allegedly) the military. The poll results generally confirm the commonly held view that the PPP will win the most seats in the parliament and that vote-buying is expected ahead of the elections. (Comment: Relatively few polling institutions in Thailand are considered to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism, and all poll statistics should be considered with skepticism. End comment.)

¶6. (U) The following are noteworthy results from recent polls (Note: 240 seats are needed to form a government in the 480-seat parliament. See reftel B for post's unscientific seat projections. End note):

-- A Bangkok University poll of 1,507 people in 16 provinces (out of a total of 76) conducted November 16 - 19 predicts a 92% turnout on election day. 46% want Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva to be Prime Minister while 23% support PPP leader Samak Sundaravej. Only 37% of respondents believed the elections would be free and fair.

-- A nationwide Suan Dusit Rajabhat University poll (sample size unknown) conducted November 1 - 10 predicts the PPP will win 180 seats compared to the Democrat Party's 160 in the new parliament. Only 3% believe the government will be successful in eradicating vote buying ahead of the election.

-- A poll allegedly sponsored by the Thai Army's Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) predicted that the PPP would win up to 280 seats in the parliament while the Democrat Party would win 125 seats. On November 16, an ISOC spokesperson insisted the leaked figures were from internal Army projections rather than scientific polling.

-- A Ramkhamhaeng University poll of 1,464 Bangkok residents conducted on November 8 showed strong support for the Democrat party among capital dwellers, with 52% supporting the party and 14% planning to vote for rival PPP. 71%

indicated they intended to vote on election day.

-- Press reports on November 22 indicated an internal PPP poll predicted the party would win 165 of the 400 constituency seats in the new parliament. The press reported that a November "For the Motherland Party" internal poll predicted the party would win 80 seats.

-- An ABAC/Morality Center poll of the Bangkok metropolitan area conducted from September 20-26 concluded that 53% of respondents would support a corrupt government if "that government would make them happy."

ENTWISTLE